THE CLEVER FARMER AND FOUR THUGS

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There lived four thugs in a village. They would cheat people by telling them false stories and take away all their money and belongings. Everyone in the village was very unhappy because of them. Many tried to teach them a lesson but no one succeeded. They continued making fool of people.

There also lived a farmer in that village. He said that he would teach these thugs such a lesson that they would forget making fool of others.

One day the farmer made a model of a woman and dressed her in nice clothes and lots of artificial ornaments. Then he covered her face with a veil and put her in a sitting position under a tree by the side of a road. The thugs used to pass by

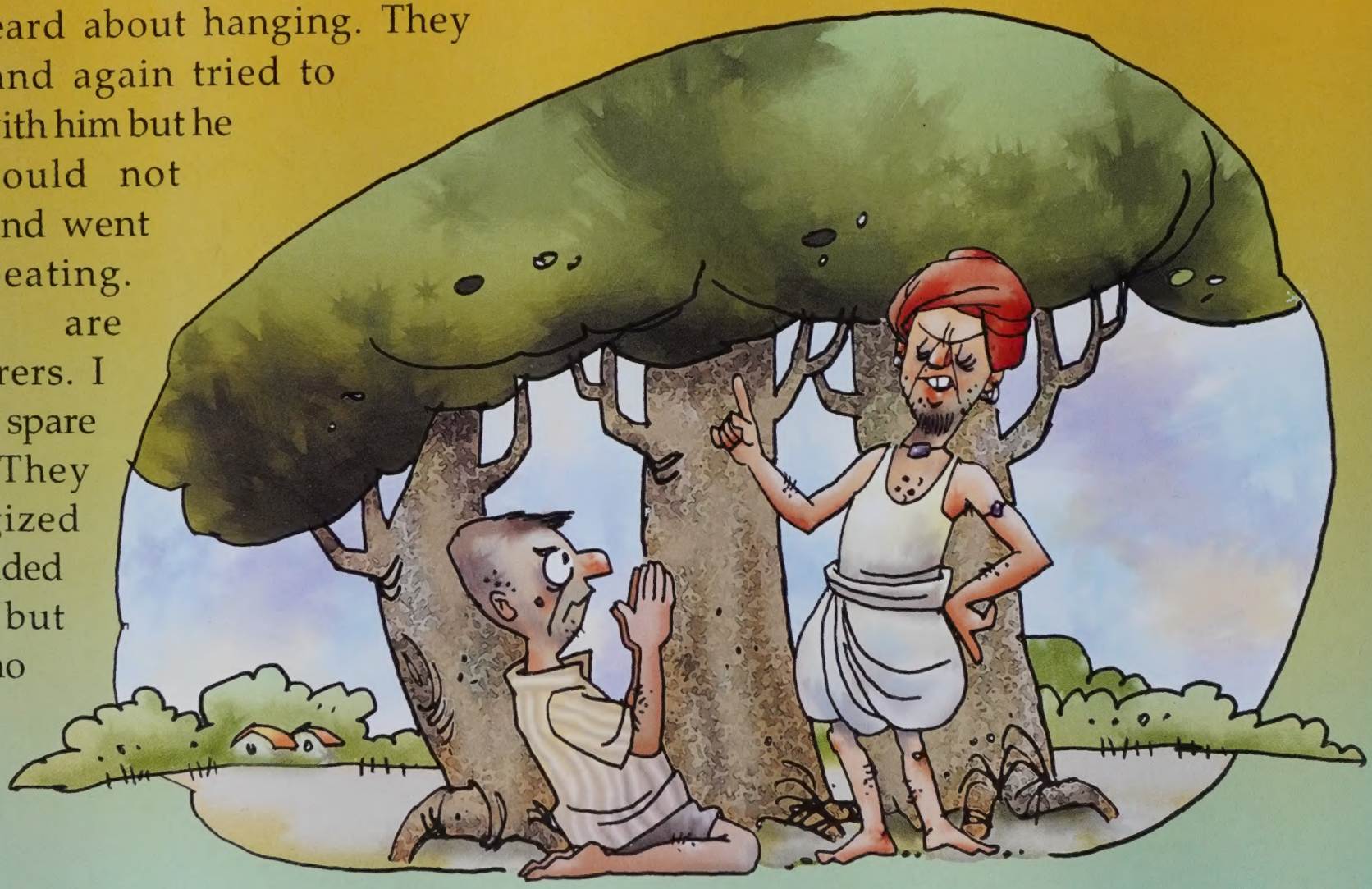
that road daily. The farmer hid behind a tree nearby.

As soon as it was evening, the thugs passed that way. They saw a lady sitting under a tree wearing a lot of jewellery. They were

curious and went near her. They had hardly touched her when the model of the lady fell down. The farmer at once came out of his hiding place and started shouting, "Help! Help! These four thieves have killed my wife. They were trying to steal her jewellery when I saw them. When they saw me they at once killed her." Crying loudly he caught hold of one thug and said, "I will hand you over to the police. You have killed my wife and I will see to it that you are

hanged." They tried to explain the situation to the farmer but he refused to listen and went on shouting.

The thieves were terribly afraid when they heard about hanging. They again and again tried to plead with him but he just would not listen and went on repeating. "You are murderers. I will not spare you." They apologized with folded hands but it had no



effect on the farmer. So they offered to marry their sister with him and give the farmer twice as much money and jewellery and also take care of the cremation. The farmer agreed. He first quickly burnt the model so that the thieves might not discover the truth.

In the morning he went to their house, married their sister and came back home with lots of money and jewellery.

After some time

the farmer told his wife that when her thug brothers come to meet her, she should send them to him at the farm. Meanwhile she should prepare nice food for them like halwa, puri, sweets, samosas etc. The farmer also kept two rabbits as pets. He always took one with him to the farm and left the other at home.

One day the thugs thought that they should go and meet their sister and find out how she was. So one morning they went to the farmer's house. Their sister told them that her husband was at the farm and they should go there to meet him. So all the four thugs went to the farm and were very happy to see him working there.

The farmer also welcomed them. He then picked up the rabbit and said, "Darling rabbit, go straight to my home and tell my wife that she should prepare halwa, puri, sweet khir and samosas for her brothers." Saying thus he let go of him and the rabbit ran into the nearby forest.

When the four thugs and the farmer reached home in the evening, they were

surprised to see that their sister had cooked all the nice things that the farmer had asked her to cook and the rabbit was sitting by her side. All the four thugs were greatly impressed and decided to take back with them this wonderful rabbit. They did not know that the rabbit sitting with their sister was not the same rabbit they had seen at the farm. They requested the farmer to let them have the rabbit. The farmer at first was not ready to part with it but finally agreed. So they went back taking the rabbit with them thinking that it will now accompany them everywhere and whenever there is any need it will take their message home. They did not realise that the farmer had made a fool of them.

Once all the four thugs were going somewhere. On the way they met some relatives who were going to their house. They thought they will send a message home through the rabbit and get an excellent meal prepared for the guests. So they told the rabbit, "Go home straight and inform our wives that guests are coming. They should prepare an excellent meal for them." The rabbit hopped, skipped and ran into the jungle.

When the thugs reached home with the guests they found the ladies sleeping after having their lunch. Seeing this the thugs became very angry but soon realised that they had been be-fooled by the farmer. Nothing could be done now!

They somehow offered some food to the guests and after the guests departed, started thinking of some plan to avenge themselves. They all marched to the farmer's house.

The farmer knew that they will come back and was waiting for

them. When he saw them coming, he went to his wife and said, "Your young brothers are coming. As soon as they reach here, you start crying loudly. I will shut you in a room and make noises as though I am beating you. Then you pretend to faint. I will then take a wooden stick and wave it over you saying, 'Soong Batoong Soong Batoong', then you get up after some

time." The wife agreed.

As soon as the thugs reached near the house, the wife started crying loudly. The farmer then pulled her inside a room, closed the door and started beating the mattress with a stick. The wife cried even more loudly. The more force he used in beating the mattress the louder came the cries of their sister. After some time the crying stopped. The wife pretended to faint. The farmer then came out and told the thugs,

"Today I beat your sister so much that she has become unconscious. She doesn't work and sits idle the whole day. If you want, you can take her back with you otherwise I may one day beat her to death."

Poor thugs didn't know what to do. They said, "Today

she has fainted. What will happen if she dies?"

The farmer said, "Oh, she often becomes unconscious. Sometimes she even dies. But I bring her back to life. If you want, I can do so in front of you."

The thugs were surprised. They said, "Yes, please show us."

The farmer took everybody into the room and waved the stick over her saying, 'Soong Batoong, Soong Batoong'. When he did this two or

three times, the wife got up rubbing her eyes.

When they saw this, the thugs were absolutely wonderstruck. They forgot about the rabbit and started thinking, 'we should somehow get this magic wand'. So they requested the farmer to give them the magic wand. After great deal of pleading the farmer agreed to sell them the magic wand for one thousand rupees. They were very happy. They thought that on reaching home they will make their wives unconscious and then revive them. They will earn a lot of money by showing this trick to others. They even thought that if someone dies in the neighbourhood they would bring him back to life and earn a lot of name and fame as well as money.

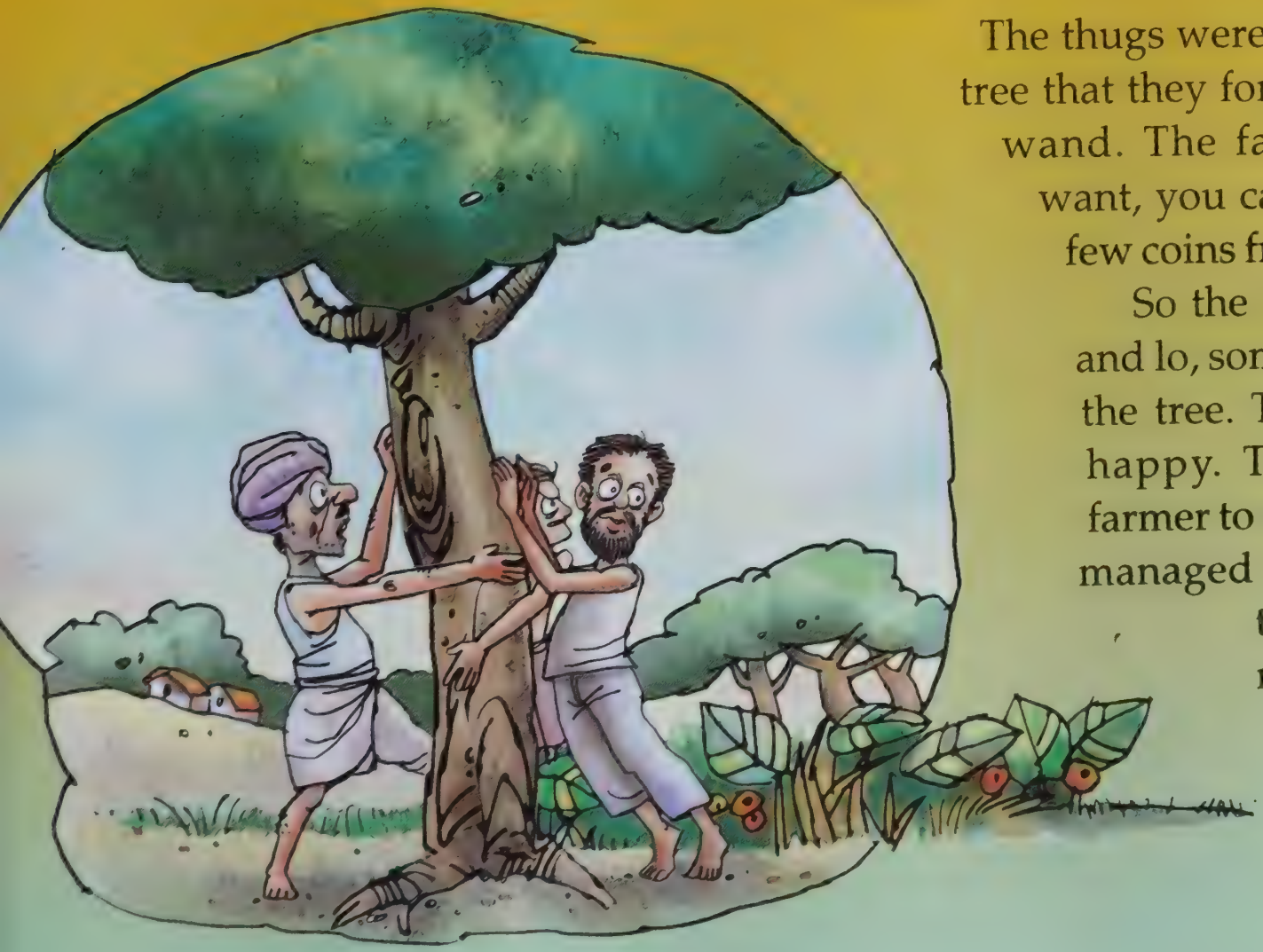
After a few days, one of their neighbours fell ill and died. The thugs said that they will bring him back to life with a magic wand but they would need two thousand rupees for it. Then they went to the neighbour's house with the magic wand and waved it on the dead body saying, 'Soong Batoong, Soong Batoong'. But can a dead person ever become alive? Again and again they waved the wand but nothing happened. The neighbours got angry and they beat the thugs saying, "You are cheating us even in our sorrow. You should be ashamed of yourselves." They took back the two thousand rupees they had given to the

thugs. So the farmer had once again made a fool of the thugs.

The thugs were now determined to punish the farmer, but the farmer had

another plan ready for them. He pasted many silver coins on the tree in front of his house. He knew that the thugs will come back when the magic wand fails in its magic. After a few days they did come back to the farmer who was waiting for them. As soon as he saw them coming he started shaking the tree. When the tree shook, the pasted coins on the tree started falling down. The thugs asked the farmer, "What are you doing?"

The farmer replied, "Can't you see? I am shaking the tree to drop some coins. It is a remarkable tree. Whenever there is any need, I shake the tree and it drops coins."



The thugs were so fascinated by the tree that they forgot about the magic wand. The farmer said, "If you want, you can also try and get a few coins from the tree."

So the thugs shook the tree and lo, some coins did fall from the tree. The thugs were very happy. They requested the farmer to sell them the tree and managed to persuade him to take five thousand rupees instead. The farmer said, "You can take

the tree but be very careful. Don't ever bend the tree. If you bend it, the tree will stop giving the money."

Somehow the thugs reached their home carrying the tree in a straight position. But they couldn't carry it inside in a straight position. So they broke their boundary wall, carried it inside the compound

and implanted it there. They were vary happy to possess a tree which would give them money whenever they wanted.

After a few days they thought 'Let us take

some money from the tree'. They shook it for a long time and only one rupee dropped. Then they realised that they have been fooled again. So crying all the way they went back to the farmer.

The farmer said, "All four of you have cheated a lot of men and it was necessary to teach you a lesson. If you promise before the whole village that you will never cheat again, then I will also not trouble you in future."

So the thugs apologized before the whole village and promised that they will never cheat anyone. The whole village gave lots of presents to the farmer for his wisdom. Thus the villagers again started living happily and peacefully.

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